

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SAIGON 04010 01 OF 02 121358 Z

47

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 INRE-00

NSC-10 CIAE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01 EUR-10 PM-03

DODE-00 USIE-00 DPW-01 IO-03 RSR-01 /066 W

----- 029019

O R 121230 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8530

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL FRANCE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

MACV

CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB

AMCONGEN DANANG

AMCONGEN NHA TRANG

AMCONGEN BIEN HOA

AMCONGEN CAN THO

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 4010

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MOPS, VS

SUBJECT: VIETNAM CEASEFIRE OVERVIEW MARCH 12 1973

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. THE SIXTH WEEK OF THE CEASEFIRE WAS MARKED BY A NUMBER OF POSITIVE STEPS, ALTHOUGH THIS PROGRESS, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN GRATIFYING AT AN EARLIER STAGE, WAS MARRED BY THE PASSAGE OF
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PAGE 02 SAIGON 04010 01 OF 02 121358 Z

TIME

AND THE HARDENING OF POSITIONS AND CONFRONTATIONS WHICH PRECEDED EACH ADVANCE. HOWEVER, THE LACK OF MEANINGFUL PRG PARTICIPATION IN THE JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION EXCEPT IN SAIGON AND ONE REGIONAL HQS, AND THE RESTIVENESS OF THE CANADIANS REGARDING THEIR ICCS COMMITMENT BEYOND 60 DAYS, WERE DARK CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON.

2. 136 US PRISONERS OF WAR WERE RELEASED LAST WEEK IN HANOI, AND ARRANGMENTS MOVED FORWARD FOR FURTHER RELEASES BY THE DRV ON MAR 14, THE END OF THE THIRD 15 DAY PERIOD. THE LINKAGE OF AMERICAN PW RELEASE SOLELY TO US/ FREE WORLD FORCE WITHDRAWALS WAS REAFFIRMED BY BOTH SIDES, WITH MORE THAN 77 PER CENT OF ALL FORCES ALREADY DEPARTED, THE US ON MARCH 11 HALTED US TROOP WITHDRAWALS AND ANNOUNCED THAT PHASE IV WITHDRAWALS WOULD NOT BEGIN UNTIL THE FINAL LIST OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND THE RELEASE DATE HAD BEEN PROVIDED BY THE COMMUNIST DELEGATIONS TO THE FOUR PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION. BOTH SIDES VOICED CONFIDENCE THAT THESE PRISONER RELEASES AND FORCE WITHDRAWALS WILL BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE 60 DAYS SPECIFIED IN THE TRUCE AGREEMENT.

3. THE IMPASSE OVER THE EXCHANGE OF VIETNAMESE PW WAS BROKEN WHEN THE GVN RAISED ITS QUOTA FOR THE SECOND TRANCHE TO 6300 CLOSE ENOUGH TO ONE QUARTER OF THE ENEMY PRISONERS HELD; SCANT TIME REMAINS FOR COMPLETION OF THE PHYSICAL MOVEMENT AND EXCHANGE OF THE PW HELD AT PHU QUOC, THESE EXCHANGES HIT ANOTHER SNAG ON THE WEEKEND WHEN THE PRG ALLEGED ARVN MILITARY ATTACKS ON AGREED EXCHANGE POINTS IN QUANG TRI AND QUANG TIN PROVINCES, BUT ELSEWHERE IN COUNTRY THE PW MOVEMENTS PROCEEDED SATISFACTORILY. ALL SICK AND WOUNDED, AND ALL BUT A HANDFUL OF WOMEN HAVE NOW BEEN RELEASED; FOUR NVA PW HAVE REFUSED REPATRIATION AT THE QUANG TRI RELEASE POINT, BUT THIS HAS NOT GIVEN RISE TO ANY CONTROVERSY.

4. LT GEN TRAN VAN TRA, CHIEF PRG DELEGATE, RETURNED MAR 6 FROM HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH COSVN, HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO FORWARD MOVEMENT IN EFFORTS TO GET PRG DEPLOYMENT TO THE FIELD AS PART OF THE FOUR PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION, AS THE PRG/ DRV CONTINUED TO INSIST ON RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE OF PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES. THE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE FPJMC FRAMWORK LOOKING TO ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TWO PARTY JMC TO TAKE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SAIGON 04010 01 OF 02 121358 Z

OVER ON X PLUS 60, NOW LESS THAN THREE WEEKS AWAY, REMAINED

DEADLOCKED, THE PRG IS EVIDENTLY TRYING TO ESTABLISH GROUND RULES WHICH WILL ALLOW THEM TO GAIN POLITICAL ADVANTAGE OUT OF DEPLOYMENT WHILE THE GVN IS EQUALLY DETERMINED TO RESTRICT PRG EXPLOITATION OF ITS PRESENCE AT TPJMC SITES.

5. PRESIDENT THIEU MET WITH THE PROVINCE CHIEFS AND OTHER SENIOR GVN OFFICIALS MARCH 6 AND REPEATED THE FIRM INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN EARLIER TO THE CORPS COMMANDERS REGARDING OBSERVANCE OF THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT. HE ALSO ORDERED THEM TO IMPROVE SECURITY FOR ICCS AND FPJMC DELEGATIONS. TURNING TO THE COMMUNITY DEFENSE AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN HE ORDERED SWEEPING REVIEW IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW CEASEFIRE SITUATION, WITH EMPHASIS ON POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMS TO WIN THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE IN THE COMING ELECTION COMPETITION WITH THE COMMUNISTS. REPORTS FROM THE PROVINCES SHOWED THAT HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE HAVING THEIR EFFECT, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO THE MUCH MORE FORTHCOMING TREATMENT FOR THE ICCS DELEGATIONS, WHICH ARE BEING WINED AND DINED BY THE PROVINCE CHIEFS AND BEING SHOWN AROUND GVN CONTROLLED AREAS.

6. FOLLOWING UP ON HIS MEETING WITH THE CORPS COMMANDERS MAR 3 PRESIDENT THIEU SENT THEM NEW AND MORE COMPREHENSIVE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT, THE STRONGEST AND MOST DEFINITIVE ORDERS ISSUED TO DATE TO LIMIT ARVN OFFENSIVE ACTIONS. THEY HAVE NOT YET BEEN MIRRORED BY A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN MILITARY ACTIVITY; IN FACT INDICES WHICH HAD BEEN DECLINING TURNED UP SLIGHTLY AT THE END OF THE WEEK. THESE ORDERS WHICH ALLOW DEFENSIVE REACTIONS RUN INTO PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION, PARTICULARLY IN CONTESTED AREAS NEITHER SIDE INTENDS TO ALLOW THE OTHER ANY ADVANTAGE EVEN WHILE PAYING LIP SERVICE TO OBSERVING A CEASEFIRE. IT IS ALSO DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH OUTRIGHT ARVN OFFENSIVE ACTIONS IN CONTESTED AREAS FROM PREEMPTIVE REACTION TO INTELLIGENCE INDICATIONS OF VC/ NVA INTENTIONS. THE CONTINUING REPORTS OF ENEMY INFILTRATION OF TROOPS AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO ARVN NERVOUSNESS.

7. THE GVN ALSO REACHED AGREEMENT WITH THE PRG FOR THE OPENING OF THE BILATERAL POLITICAL TALKS MARCH 19 ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF PARIS. THE MAKEUP OF THE GVN DELEGATION HEADED BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, INDICATES THAT THE GVN INTENDS TO TAKE THESE TALKS SERIOUSLY.

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PAGE 04 SAIGON 04010 01 OF 02 121358 Z

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 04010 02 OF 02 121400 Z

47

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 INRE-00

NSC-10 CIAE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 EUR-10

DODE-00 USIE-00 DPW-01 IO-03 RSR-01 /066 W

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O R 121230 Z MAR 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8531
INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 4010

LIMDIS

8. WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE CANADIAN MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WOULD VISIT SAIGON WITH A GROUP OF POLITICIANS TO EVALUATE THE CANADIAN ROLE IN THE INDOCHINA CEASEFIRE, ATTENTION FOCUSED ON THE ICCS. THERE WERE TROUBLING INDICATIONS OF INCREASED COMMUNIST OBSTRUCTIVENESS IN THE POLISH HUNGARIAN REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE UNANIMOUS REGION II REPORT ON THE SA HUYNH INVESTIGATION, CHARACTERIZING IT AS " INCOMPLETE" DUE TO THE FAILURE OF THE ORIGINAL COMPLAINANT, DRV/ PRG, TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INVESTIGATION. THE DRV/ PRG DREW BACK BECAUSE THE ARVN HAD REGAINED THE SA
SECRET

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PAGE 02 SAIGON 04010 02 OF 02 121400 Z

HUYNH AREA BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE INSPECTION TEAM. IF THE PRINCIPLE STANDS UNCHANGED, IT WOULD GIVE ANY JMC PARTY A VETO ON ICCS INVESTIGATIONS, EMASCULATING THE COMMISSION'S EFFECTIVENESS. IN THE FIELD INDICATIONS ARE MIXED: IN REGION VII (CAN THO), ICCS CONTINUES TO INITIATE INVESTIGATIONS WHILE, IN REGION I (HUE) THE HUNGARIANS REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY INVESTIGATIONS WITHOUT THE DRV/PRG. CANADIAN DELEGATES, WHO HAVE CONTINUED TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF ACTION EVEN SINCE THE HUNGARIANS SUCCEEDED TO THE CHAIR, HAVE BEGUN TO SHOW THE STRAIN AFTER SIX WEEKS, FRUSTRATED AS MUCH BY THE UNCERTAINTIES AND INDECISIONS IN ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AS BY THE HESITATIONS AND DELAYS IN SUBSTANTIVE INVESTIGATIONS.

9. THE REMOVAL OF THE SA-2 MISSILES AT KHE SANH, CONFIRMED BY MACV ON MARCH 12 MARKS A MAJOR SUCCESS FOR THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT AND SHOULD BUOY CANADIAN ICCS MORALE. ALTHOUGH COMMUNIST MOTIVATION FOR COMPLYING WITH THE DEMAND PUT FORWARD BY THE US DELEGATION TO THE FPJMC CANNOT BE DETERMINED, IT MAY WELL BE THAT CANADIAN INSISTENCE ON AN ICCS INVESTIGATION OF THE COMPLAINT PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE, PARTICULARLY AS THE COMMUNISTS FOUND IT INCREASINGLY EMBARRASSING TO DELAY ICCS RECONNAISSANCE OF THE LAO BAO TEAM SITE WEST OF KHE SANH.

10. WITH SEVENTEEN DAYS TO GO BEFORE X PLUS 60, THE PRIORITY TASKS FACING THE PARTIES TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT APPEARED TO BE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TWO PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION TO CONTINUE ENFORCEMENT OF THE CEASEFIRE, THE MAINTENANCE OF CANADIAN CONFIDENCE IN THE EFFICACY OF ITS ROLE IN THE ICCS AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF FURTHER REDUCTIONS IN THE LEVEL OF FIGHTING.
BUNKER

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